FBIS DAILY REPORT

MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

20 MARCH 1987

Israel

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In a bid to preserve the secrecy of testimonies to the Pollard fact-finding committee, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir is searching for a legal way to prevent material gathered by the committee from being given to the United States, Jerusalem television reported. According to Jerusalem radio, several clients have been legally advised not to testify before the committee, casting doubt on its future. Committee Chairman Yehoshu'a Rotenstreich told the television he would keep his word that "even if one of the people summoned fails to appear before the committee, it would cease operating at once."

Talks with USSR Envoy — "Another" meeting took place in Washington between a "high-ranking" Soviet diplomat and an Israeli diplomat concerning the resumption of diplomatic relations, Jerusalem radio revealed. The Soviet official indicated that if Israel agrees to a preparatory conference leading to an international conference on the Middle East, it would elicit a "turnabout in the Kremlin's stance and contribute to the restoration of relations."

Palestinian Talks

The Palestine National Salvation Front (PNSF) criticized the decision to hold a PNC meeting, insisting it will "exacerbate differences within the PLO," Radio Monte Carlo reported citing a PNSF spokesman. PNSF leader Khalid al-Fahum is now holding talks in Tripoli with representatives from six Palestinian groups on drawing up a draft agreement to restore unity and the PLO nationalist policy, the spokesman said.

In Libya, Colonel al-Qadhdhafi met with the Palestinian representatives, including the PFLP's George Habash and the DFLP's Nayif Hawatimah, JANA reported.

Afghanistan

Foreign Minister Abdol Wakil contended that the Geneva proximity talks could have ended by now if Pakistan had been flexible, Moscow *Pravda* reported 19 March. Asserting that U.S. anti-Afghan policy remains the chief obstacle to success, Wakil said Pakistani support for DRA counterrevolutionaries and its obstruction of refugees' return to the DRA "did not contribute to a favorable atmosphere in Geneva." Wakil noted that "positions came somewhat closer together" adding, however, that this was "entirely because of the Afghan side's approach to to the problem."

Lebanon

The Iranian Embassy in Beirut "is not concerned" about a recent report in a Soviet paper claiming that Anglican Church envoy Terry Waite is being held in the embassy, Voice of Lebanon Radio reported. The embassy also issued a statement on 19 March calling for the release of four Iranian hostages and welcoming the Anglican Church's willingness to mediate for their return, the Voice of National Resistance noted.

Security Situation — Israeli aircraft conducted mock raids over Sidon on 19 March, Beirut radio reported, adding that the planes were confronted by ground defenses.

A car bomb exploded in East Beirut when the driver started the engine, killing three people and injuring another three, the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon reported.

Libya

The Libyan charge in Kuwait denied press reports that Tripoli has asked a third party to mediate in the dispute with Cairo over a Libyan aircraft that landed at an Egyptian airport, KUNA reported.

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Defense Minister Terms Reconciliation 'Necessity'
AU181025 Sofia NARODNA ARMIYA in Bulgarian 16 Mar 87 P 4

[Article by DRA Defense Minister Major General Mohammad Rafi, special for *Narodna Arimya*]

[Text] In accordance with the declaration of the Revolutionary Council of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, "For National Reconciliation," 2 months ago on 15 January 1987 the Armed Forces in our country were instructed to cease fire with all types of weapons and to stop military operations. Personally, I think national reconciliation is an objective necessity at the present stage of the national democratic revolution in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. It is a guarantee for the preservation of an undivided, independent, and nonaligned Afghanistan. We decided to adopt national reconciliation because we have powerful military and economic support, as well as the reliable assistance of the broad masses of the population, of our people, who are tired of war and who long for peace.

Unfortunately, the leaders of the seven "Islamic parties" who met in Peshawar (Pakistan), rejected our proposal for the restoration of peace in Afghanistan. In this respect they were assisted by the United States, their chief ally, which immediately following the April Revolution in 1978, assumed the protection of the counter- revolutionaries. The United States is trying to destroy the process of national reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and is doing everything to exacerbate the situation and to discredit our policy.

It would, however, be incorrect to assume that our enemies are succeeding with their policy in all places. The situation is calm in the north, the northeast, as well as in certain northwestern areas, and in the south-west region of our country, as well as in certain central zones and in Kabul. The process of national reconciliation is actively developing in the aforementioned areas. However, the nearer we approach the Afghan-Pakistani border, the more tense it becomes. In many places the enemy is engaging in organized armed actions. The Afghan Army has been forced to take reciprocal measures in these cases.

Thus, for example, in the area of Khowst (Paktia Province), the prevailing forces of the enemy attacked a battalion of border troops and forced it to withdraw. The subdetachments of the Afghan Army responded to the strike and regained those positions lost. This is also what we will do in the future. The Armed Forces will destroy the enemy's bases; they will strike at caravans carrying arms. The enemy must be aware of the fact that it will not be allowed to take advantage of the cease-fire.

We must stress another feature peculiar to our relations with the bandits. The armed formations of the enemy can be divided into different groups — with certain reservations. There are the "irreconcilable" ones, the "hesitating" ones, and those who insist upon "national reconciliation". The "irreconcilable" ones are trying to discredit our new policy and to cause it to fail. They are doing everything possible to provoke the Afghan Army to reciprocate their fire. This applies to large gangs of "Captain Ismail [name as published] in Herat, of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud in the valley of Panjab, to the gang of Karim Asef [name as published] in the Province of Kapisa, and others. The chiefs of these gangs do not wish to establish any contacts with the state authorities. "The hesitating" ones (their number being considerable) do not engage in active combat operations, but prefer to wait for things to develop. The number of those who are in favor of national reconciliation is constantly increasing. It is sufficient to say, that since the beginning of this process more than 10,000 people have already put down their arms and more than 100 formations have engaged in negotiations with the government on conditions to cease the armed struggle. This process continues.

Nevertheless, terror remains as the basis of the gangs' actions. The new element is that it has been intensified within the gangs themselves. The reasons for this are connected with the unexpected support by broad strata of the population for the policy of national reconciliation. In order to prevent their loss of position, as well as to "preserve their zones of influence" the leaders of the seven "Islamic parties" are now trying by all means to stop the propagation of truthful information about the DRA Government's policy on national reconciliation and on the cease-fire. I can cite numerous typical examples in this respect, which in my opinion are characteristic of the situation. The leaders of the gangs are collecting all radio receivers from the population of the settlements under their control, but also from the rank and file members of the gangs. Only the "chiefs" are entitled to their own television sets.

At the same time, however, the proclamation of the cease-fire by no means signifies the end of the war. We are making energetic efforts to maintain the combat readiness of our Armed Forces, to maintain vigilance, and to prevent self-indulgence, leniency, and pacifism. We are aware of the fact that the process is irreversible; however, at the same time the further pursuit of combat actions on the part of the bandit formations makes the creation of conditions for a domestic dialogue without any interference from abroad more difficult. This is why the question of covering the border with Pakistan deserves priority treatment. Unfortunately, there has not been much progress on this question so far, despite the fact that measures were taken to consolidate the border troops at the expense of Army subdetachments and of detachments from the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of Interior. In implementing this important task, we are trying to obtain the support of the border tribes. Many Pushtu tribes at their council meetings spoke in favor of the policy of national reconciliation and decided to make their fellow-tribesmen abandon the gangs' detachments. This is, without a doubt, a positive step forward. Finally, in summing up, I would like to declare that under the present-day difficult circumstances, the Armed Forces of Afghanistan will strictly observe the cease-fire and will comprehensively support the process of national reconciliation in our country.

Rebel Leader Calls Peace Plan 'Political War'
PM191211 Amsterdam DE VOLKSKRANT in Dutch 14 Mar 87 p 4

[Undated interview with Afghanistan National Liberation Front leader Sebratullah Mojadidi by Joris Cammelbeeck: "It Is Hard To Trust Russians"]

[Text] Amsterdam — The Afghan resistance will continue to struggle with undiminished strength against the Moscow-supported government in Kabul and the continuing Soviet occupation — even while progress is being made at the 10th round of the indirect talks between the Afghan and Pakistani Governments in Geneva. The main group absent from these talks is the Afghan resistance movement.

If they were invited to attend these talks, they would refuse. They view participation as implicit recognition of the government in Kabul. The cease-fire announced unilaterally in January by leader Najibullah and his efforts toward a government of national reconciliation have been unable to persuade the Afghan guerrillas, or mujahidin, to lay down their arms.

In order to create some clarity in the otherwise confusing political and military developments in and around Afghanistan, Pax Christi and the Free Afghanistan Committee are organizing an event at the Royal Institute for the Tropics today. Experts, politicians, and representatives of the Afghan resistance will be taking part. These include Professor Sebratullah Mojadidi (60), professor of Islamic law and jurisprudence and leader of the Afghanistan National Liberation Front. His organization is part of the Alliance of Afghan mujahidin, which comprises the seven largest resistance movements.

In his hotel room in Amsterdam Prof Mojadidi touched on recent developments in his country. He said of "Geneva": "There are indications that the Soviet Union wants to get out of Afghanistan. But as a superpower it wants to do so without losing too much face. It does not want to look like it has been beaten. The Russians have great problems in Afghanistan. They have not had a day of quiet since the invasion in 1979. Even their embassy in Kabul is under missile fire. Also, it is difficult to trust the Russians. They have continually broken their promises. But in the last few months a growing number of people have begun to think that the Russians will withdraw. The only remaining issue still not agreed upon in Geneva is the timetable for a withdrawal."

Mojadidi's last remark gave the impression that he would welcome an agreement in Geneva. It is already clear that when the withdrawal of the Russians — ideally a swift one — has been arranged, an internal political settlement is still a long way off.

"From the very beginning our criticism has been that the most important parties are not sitting around the table in Geneva — the Soviet Union as aggressor and the mujahidin as the representatives of the Afghan people. But if a solution emerges from Geneva that is of interest to the Afghan people and our jihad (holy war), we would accept it. We would test the result against the four principles formulated by the UN General Assembly and against the resolutions of the Islamic conferences and the nonaligned nations."

One of the points in the accord currently being discussed in Geneva aims at ending aid to the resistance. What progress will the resistance be able to make with such an accord if the government in Kabul remains in power and Pakistan closes its borders to arms transports? It is becoming increasingly apparent that Pakistan is worried about its 3 million Afghan refugees. They are threatening to become a destabilizing factor for the government of President Ziaul Haq.

Mojadidi assured me: "Pakistan has promised to do nothing that would go against our interests. We hope that Pakistan will keep its word. If, however, Pakistan does leave us in the lurch, we would fight on alone and make sacrifices for our freedom. After all, we began our struggle alone. Only later did we receive support from Pakistan and the free world. We just cannot accept the Russian influence and the puppet government in Kabul — if for no other reason than so many victims — 1.3 million — have already fallen.

Mojadidi also has complete faith in the United States and he told me how he, together with other leaders, had been given the assurance by President Reagan and his aides that Washington will not do anything against the interests of the Afghan people. "On the other hand you can never fully trust diplomats. In the final analysis we put our faith in God. He was also the reason why we began our struggle and He will help us. With His help we have already liberated 85 percent of the country."

Mojadidi considers the recent peace policy of Moscow and the Afghan Government to be a "political war" intended to influence and hoodwink public opinion in the West. According to Mojadidi it is completely illogical for the Soviet Union or the Najibullah government to set conditions, as they began the fighting. The suggestion that there was a civil war even before the Soviet invasion between the reform-minded communists and the traditional Islamic population was immediately rejected. "Reconciliation will perhaps be possible after the Russians have withdrawn. Even before the recent round of talks in Geneva the Alliance announced a general amnesty for all the communist elements in Afghanistan. We have also said that in the future Afghanistan must have the status of a nonaligned Islamic nation with good relations with the free world, above all with our neighbors."

Unlike the fundamentalist parties in the Alliance, Mojadidi can see within the framework of this reconciliation a role for ex-King Zahir Shah in a neutralist transitional government. Thereafter general elections would have to be held. There are differences of opinion on this point within the Alliance. "The extremist parties have major objections here. They want to lead Afghanistan. We say 'no' to this. The three moderate parties to which I belong are of the view that the population must elect its own government and leaders, either through general elections or through a jirgah" (large gathering of tribal leaders — editor).

Prof Mojadidi does understand some of the objections to the ex-king, but gives him the benefit of the doubt. "In his day he was very good to the Russians. In fact he actually opened the doors for them and because of such good relations the Russians thought that they could invade our country. But he is not unsuitable as a transitional figure."

He is also clear about the Islamic character of a future Afghan republic. He dismissed reservations and worries in Western circles about mixing religion and state. If awful things come from this, then it is due to people and not to Islam, Mojadidi said.

"We hope that an Islamic republic will guarantee peace, justice, and equality. Afghanistan has a tradition of moderation. And although, for example, most members of my family, like many other people, have been murdered, we have never made the transition to terrorist acts abroad. We are not fanatics."

References to all sorts of misdeeds committed in the past by Christians and by European states in the name of Christ and through which the credibility of Christianity was called into question, do not disconcert the professor. "That is due to the religion. I have studied Christianity. It has no detailed laws and rules for all of life's questions. It simply has a few simple rules. Islam has rules and laws for everything — for politics, for the economy, for interpersonal relations, and other things. Many books have been written by foreigners, including Europeans, and they have all concluded that Islam, if properly applied, is the best religion for peace in the world. Thus, it is more of a pity that people do not live by it. That is their failing, not that of Islam."

Press Conference Details Human Rights Meeting

LD200632 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0506 GMT 20 Mar 87

[Excerpt] Kabul, March 19, BAKHTAR — The delegation of the DRA, after participating to the 43d session of the UN Commission on Human Rights which was held in Geneva, explained in a press conference held here today to the local and foreign journalists about the role played by the DRA's delegation at the session.

Sarwar Wyuresh, deputy foreign minister, Salim Majaz, deputy of the Armed Forces Department in the PDPA CC, Karim Shadan, chairman of Special Revolutionary Court, Haji Sultan Mohammed and Sayed Ahmed, former leaders of the opposition groups which have recently joined the revolutionary state of the DRA, participated in the press conference.

At the beginning of the conference, Sarwar Wyuresh, deputy foreign minister of the DRA, while explaining the role of the DRA in the 43d session of Human Rights Commission of the UN, said that Abdol Wakil, Politburo member of the Central Committee of the PDPA and foreign minister of the DRA, in his speech detailed the legal settings and practical areas of the observance of human rights in the DRA as well as developments in relation to the expansion of the policy of national reconciliation in the revolutionary Afghanistan.

Foreign minister of the DRA elaborated at the session that it is apparent to everyone that the United States spends hundreds of millions of dollars for training and arming the extremist groups of the counter-revolution. The U.S. imperialism has allocated 600 million dollars for the continuation of fratricidal war in Afghanistan, the major part of which has been spent on the supply of advanced weapons including Stinger missiles.

Abdol Wakil had added at the session that the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, DRA, believes that the questions of human rights should be solved inside every country by their own people and their governments. The measures and resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights and other international organisations about the position of human rights in the world can be fruitful only if facts are taken into account.

Thus, the Government of the DRA has recently invited the delegation of the International Committee of Red Cross to pay a free visit of the prisons in Afghanistan and to get informed from the real status of the prisoners. [passage omitted]

Agriculture Official Cites Production Figures

LD200004 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0445 GMT 19 Mar 87

[Text] Kabul, March 18, BAKHTAR — The area under plant cultivation increased by 6000 hectares during the outgoing Afghan year ending on March 20, 1987, says a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reform to a BAKHTAR reporter.

The area of cotton cultivation was increased by 9000 hectares of land as a result of which the area under cultivation of industrial plants was also increased by 149.9 hectares in the same period. This in turn caused a rise of 108 thousand tons in the production of raw cotton and that of sugar beet by 10 thousand tons.

There has been a rise of two thousand tons each in the production of sugar cane and oil products respectively and the production of vegetables and kitchen-gardens rose by 57 thousand tons, including potatoes by three thousand tons.

In addition to the already-existing agricultural mechanised stations in seven provinces of the country, a new agricultural mechanised station was also established in Nangarhar Province in the same period, said representative of the ministry.

The activities of the mechanised stations have expanded from 66 thousand hectares to 81 thousand hectares and their incomes have shown a growth of 21 percent.

The voluntary organisation of peasants in agricultural cooperatives is being considered an effective method in the growth of the sector of agriculture and livestock. Accordingly, much attention was paid to organise the peasants voluntarily, to promote the extension of agricultural credits to cooperatives and to consolidate their material and technical bases and thus to boost the cooperative movement.

Forty five new cooperatives were established during the outgoing year and thus the number of active cooperatives has reached to 460 and their membership to over 67 thousand persons.

Likewise, the gross agricultural production of cooperatives indicates a growth of 15 percent as compared with the preceding year.

Barnala Affirms Fight Against Terrorism To Continue

BK191522 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1530 GMT 19 Mar 87

[Text] The Punjab chief minister has asserted that his government is determined to fight terrorist forces to restore peace and normalcy in the state soon. He was winding up the debate on the motion of thanks to the governor for his address to the assembly. The motion was later passed by the House.

The chief minister reitrated that he has the highest regard for the Akal Takht Saheb [highest seat of Sikh religion] and religious leaders and there is no question of any confrontation with them, but he asserted that religious places and platforms should not be misused for sheltering or encouraging terrorists. He also denied any move to dissove the SGPC [Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak — Sikh Temples Management Committee] or replace it with a board. He criticized the breakaway group of the Akali Dal and said they are playing a dengerous game by providing political cover to terrorists and using the Akal Takht and religion for merely achieving their political ends.

Mr Barnala described his excommunication from the Sikh panth [religion] as politically motivated and said that never before in the history of Akal Takht such hukumnamas [edicts] were issued. His excommunication was for carrying out the directives of the Sarbat Khalsa [highest Sikh congregation] held at Anandpur Saheb which was also attended by all the five Sikh head priests and senior leaders.

A dreaded terrorist, Ranjit Singh, was shot dead in an encounter with the security forces near village (Sharon) in Amritsar District today. According to the district police chief, Ranjit Singh was carrying a reward of 50,000 rupees on his head and was operating from the Golden Temple complex.

State Minister Rules Out Intervention in Sri Lanka

BK191248 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1230 GMT 19 Mar 87

[Text] Government today shared the concern expressed by members in the Rajya Sabha over the manner in which the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka has developed. Replying to points raised by members during the discussion of a call-attention motion on the subject, the minister of state for external affairs, Mr Natwar Singh, said the only lasting solution can be achieved through negotiations. India has conveyed to Sri Lanka that negotiations on its proposal of 19 December can resume only after complete lifting of blockade of Jaffna and cessation of all military action.

The minister ruled out military intervention as suggested by some opposition members and said it would have grave and serious consequences.

Referring to members' concern over the security environment in the region following induction of foreign military advisers in Sri Lanka, Mr Natwar Singh said India is watching the situation closely. He assured the members that we are not sparing any effort through diplomatic channels.

HINDU Editorial Wants Decisive Action on Sri Lanka

BK181513 Delhi THE HINDU in English 11 Mar 87 p 8

[Editorial: "Sri Lanka: India Must Act Decisively"]

[Text] The course of priority action — led by the solidarity factor and humanitarian concern — that has been initiated as a result of the recent strategy sessions in New Delhi is designed to make one thing clear to the Sri Lankan Government and the international community. India might have withdrawn its "good offices" or mediatory role relating to the negotiations as a consequence of Colombo's pursuit of a murderous "military option" against the Tamils, which has rendered the political track irrelevant at this point. But this does not in the least imply that this nation, its Government and people, are powerless to act in solidarity with the Sri Lankan Tamil people, or are going to allow their political demands and struggle to be drowned in blood by the Jayewardenes and the Athulathmudalis. Such a conclusion might not have been obvious a few weeks ago — given the lack of focus in official Indian policy over a prolonged period (beginning in 1985) — but the new political posture and course must be welcomed. The point is that the reworked posture and line vis-a-vis the Sri Lankan Government on the one hand, and the Tamils on the other, must be rendered meaningful by practical, measured, concerted action. The size, geo-political placement, strategic and democratic interests, and resources of India argue strongly against any policy line which does not regard the so-called ethnic crisis of Sri Lanka — the unprecedented human crisis of the Sri Lankan Tamils — as a frontline concern and problem for India. In its course of tragic development from July 1983, this ethnic crisis has affected India more and more, cast a considerable burden on it, and, through inducting an assortment of external elements deeply hostile to India, militated against its larger national and security interests. Being unclear about the primacy of the solidarity factor and the strategic interest, not summoning the political will and the requisite policy resources to act coherently and firmly on such an understanding, has proved costly in terms of the human factor and also the credibility of the policy framework. In other words, the time and opportunity lost must be made up intelligently, decisively, urgently.

No one expects the Government of India to go public with all the details of the course of "action" developed to deal with the sharply worsened situation — which has taken a toll of some 550 innocent Tamil lives since January 28, inflicted barbarities and state terrorism on a completely alienated people, including an economic, communications and psychological blockade, posed a still-developing genocidal threat, and cast an appalling shadow on the future of Tamil-Sinhala relations as well as the unity and viability of Sri Lanka. But a few things must be made plain at this juncture. The onus of preserving the unity and stability of Sri Lanka is, self-evidently, not on India; it is on the rulers and political forces of the island. And, demonstrably (as the Prime Minister has made clear in Parliament and elsewhere very recently), the patience of Indian policymakers with the ways and intentions of Messrs. Jayewardene, Athulathmudali, and Co. has worn thin indeed. In the demarche of February 9 — which really began the current chapter of India's Sri Lanka policy — the Prime Minister wanted the Sri Lankan Government to make clear its commitment to the December 19 proposals as "a basis and only a beginning point for the negotiations", but the political

element represented by those ideas does not appear terribly relevant at this moment. New Delhi is clearly not going to wait for Colombo to make a "positive" response at a time of its choosing, and must be expected to proceed independently in solidarity with the besieged Tamils, but there are still options before Mr. Jayewardene and his colleagues. It must be understood that this nation's policy resources will be made to work, on the ground, against the Sri Lankan Government's "military solution" and India is clear that if this line is pursued by Colombo, the conflict will be prolonged and the situation will escalate. If, on the other hand, the Sri Lankan Government is willing to meet the very reasonable requirements formulated by India — and, surely, these must include a reversal of the unjust military results obtained on the ground in the very recent period — then, even in the midst of a sharp deterioration of bilateral relations, the situation could be redeemed in a politically constructive, intelligent way.

PATRIOT Questions Sri Lanka Sincerity on Mediation

BK190243 Delhi THE PATRIOT in English 13 Mar 87 p 4

[Editorial: "Colombo on Trial"]

[Text] Is it only another phase in a blow-hot-and-cold operation? If this question is raised by its announcement of a set of measures to reopen the path for efforts for a political settlement of the Sri Lanka ethnic issue, Colombo has only itself to blame. Its record is such that it should take much more than this belated gesture to prompt a ready renewal of India's mediatory role which is known to be among the objectives of the Colombo move. It is a record of repeated breaches of the understanding which alone can make such a role profitable and even possible.

The J.R. Jayewardene regime has been consistent in an apparently calculated exercise in inconsistency about this basic matter ever since the all-party round table conference was convened in Colombo following the July 1983 massacre of Tamils in the island, and through the Thimpu talks and all other aborted attempts in the direction of negotiations. Through all this, it has stuck unswervingly in fact to a line of military solution that has inexorably led to the latest, all-out offensive of barbaric cruelty against the entire minority population. It was Colombo's refusal to provide a basis for resumed talks that forced New Delhi to discontinue its good offices. And the more recent ferocious assault on blockaded Jaffna has only confirmed this country's conclusion about the futility of its efforts. The measures announced now hardly guarantee a fundamental reversal of the course thus far pursued by the island's rulers who have so openly identified themselves with the majority chauvinism at home and with forces abroad that are known to seek added tensions in the Indian Ocean region. Selective relaxation of curbs on fuel supply to Tamil-dominated areas and release of some categories of detenus will not spell anything like an end to the agony of the oppressed people on whom a war had been wantonly imposed.

While the Union Government waits and watches, it will do well to reappraise its own Sri Lankan policy as a response to a problem with inescapable ramifications for this country. Expressions of India's concern over the situation and disapproval of Colombo's transparent strategy and tactics have already proved unavailing. Persistence by Mr Jayewardene's trigger-happy crusaders of Sinhala racism in the reckless course of a military solution to this issue is fraught with consequences that can hardly be ignored this side of the Palk Straits. New Delhi has repeatedly reiterated its principled position regarding the framework within which a settlement must be sought; but it cannot afford to be a mere observer of a state-terrorist attack on human rights proceeding unhindered in the name of defending the island's integrity. It cannot let the main culprits responsible for the sanguinary conflict succeed in their game of confusing the issue and camouflaging their intentions that run directly counter to any idea of a settlement. Finally, it cannot afford to discount the potential threat to its own security from the Indian Ocean region and the dimensions it is likely to acquire in the long run, if tensions being created here are allowed to continue and be aggravated.

HINDU Says 'Nuclear Option' Not Signed Away

BK181523 Delhi THE HINDU in English 9 Mar 87 p 8

[Editorial: "Implications of Pak. Nuclear Capability"]

[Text] The uninhibited and boastful remarks Pakistan's top nuclear scientist, Dr Abdul Qadir Khan, made recently to an Indian jounrnalist, Mr Kuldip Nayyar, have given a fresh content and edge to the disturbing knowledge that has been with India for some eight years: that Pakistan, under a military dictatorship, has actively pursued a nuclear weapons option and it must now, for all practical purposes, be counted as a country with a nuclear weapons capability, even status). No light has been shed on whether Pakistan has been able to develop a bomb configuration or design, complete with a triggering device, in a militarily deliverable form, but the assumption must be that after the enrichment breakthrough, the ability to fabricate some kind of crudely deliverable nuclear weapon should not be underestimated by Indian policymakers. The controversy set off by the remarks of the man behind the Kahuta uranium enrichment facility has posed at least three major questions or issues originating from the no longer clandestine venture. The first concerns the objective status of the Pakistani nuclear programme. According to Dr Khan, the Kahuta plant became "fully operational" by the beginning of 1979; "what the CIA has been saying about our possessing the bomb is correct"; Pakistan has been able to upgrade its uranium enrichment to a 90 per cent level, which is clearly weapons grade; and no testing of the nuclear explosive or weapon is deemed necessary since "the testing does not have to be on the ground" and "can be done in a laboratory, through a simulator." These bits of specific information given to the Indian journalist (whether "carelessly" or by design, is hardly important in this case) are in line with the expert evaluations made in the United States, India, and elsewhere. They underline the dangerous military character of the thrust of a supposedly peaceful atomic energy programme, which has no operational power side worth speaking about. With two centrifuge enrichment plants in operation, including an experimental one, this programme obviously has enough explosive grade or weapon grade material to put together one device or more per year; the parallel reprocessing route tried out at Chashma has evidently not been as successful but clearly represents some kind of future menace. The nature of the threat Pakistan sees itself as

posing to India is helpfully summarised by Dr Khan thus: "Nobody can undo Pakistan or take us for granted. We are here to stay and let it be clear that we shall use the bomb if our existence is threatened." Let there, then, be no doubt about either the objective, or the subjectively perceived, nature of the Kahuta uranium enrichment venture and the lesser known endeavour to produce plutonium and reprocess it. This reconfirmed knowledge leads straight to the point that the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, has emphasised in Parliament: That the United States has not been involved in any process of restraining Pakistan in its nuclear ambitions, but has actually gone along with it, under the circumstances, by coming up with a dangerous armaments programme that increases the security pressure and burden on India. "America knows it", boasted Dr Khan and surely this has been the case since at least early 1979 (and almost certainly earlier than that). It was no coincidence that the Carter administration, sensing the Congressional and public mood, went along with the sober political effort that resulted in the Symington amendment of May 1979. It suspended military as well as economic aid to Pakistan and squarely blamed this on the character of that country's nuclear energy activity; the fact that economic aid to India was not suspended (despite the Peaceful Nuclear Explosion of May 1974) demonstrated that the United States could see a substantive difference between the two programmes. But, following the Afghanistan developments beginning in 1979, the Carter administration initially, and then the Reagan administration, brought about a new military relationship with the anti-democratic Pakistani regime which has put a great deal of pressure on India's security. An unprecedented military and economic aid programme — inducting into the South Asian region a qualitatively new generation of weaponry spearheaded by the F-16s — was put in place. Indeed, Pakistan, despite having become a formal member of the Nonaligned Movement, is being treated by the U.S. as one of its military allies. Specifically, the Reagan administration claimed that the sophisticated conventional weapon supply to Pakistan was required to "dampen" the client's nuclear appetite, or to provide it with a big enough incentive not to go the nuclear weapons route. That has, notoriously, failed to happen and meanwhile the U.S.-Pakistan military liaison has progressed to the stage of joint military exercises, intelligence sharing and so on (to go by the information made available during the current Congressional hearings connected with the proposal for a new six-year $4.2 billion aid package for Pakistan). The current attitude of the Reagan administration is quite clear: responding to the nonproliferation specialist, Senator John Glenn's letter demanding a suspension of U.S. military aid to Pakistan, Mr Robert Peck, a senior State Department official, confessed that there was no question of the U.S. obtaining "reliable assurances" from Pakistan about its nuclear venture and appealed to Congress not to do anything to impair U.S. aid to that country through "public confrontations" or "legislative ultimata." Thus has the fig leaf has been removed from the nature of the American policy and it is up to India, its leaders, and its people, to draw realistic conclusions from the latest exposures.

The third issue relates to the immediate implications of the Pakistani nuclear menace, and collusive U.S. strategic policy, for India's atomic energy programme and policy. While a very watchful eye has to be kept on the strategic security implications, the advantage is that the long established nuclear policy framework does provide the elements of soundness, restraint, specialised resources, and openended flexibility demanded by a very complicated situation. Sovereign India, which is correctly opposed to the discriminatory principle underpinning the Non-Proliferation Treaty and regime, has not acceded to this multilateral arragement; there is no question today — if there ever was — of caving in to the pressures, just because the Pakistani military regime asks or rather challenges India to sign away (through electing one among a set of discriminatory non-proliferation propositions) its "nuclear option." With the Kahuta uranium enrichment plant fully operational, what is the intention and meaning of Gen Ziaul Haq's recurrent call to India to agree to a nuclear weapons free zone in South Asia, or to a mutual "inspection" of facilities? Whose game must he be understood to be playing? Even as India — for reasons of international politics as well as its own security — keeps its nuclear option live and must be expected to watch closely the precise moves by Pakistan at this sensitive juncture, it very soberly keeps in place the self-imposed restraint on the character of its nuclear energy activity: which is to say that, while there is no doubt that India is a nuclear explosives power (after May 1974) and a power with the full capability to produce a nuclear weapon (if such a security and political requirement were imposed on it), it is at present committed to the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy and against any military application. But the sovereign right to decide on the nuclear option, in response to the overall circumstances, has not — it must be emphasised — been signed away.

500 Megawatt Reactor Design in Advanced Stage

BK190239 Delhi THE PATRIOT in English 13 Mar 87 p 5

[From the "Rajya Sabha Answers" column]

[Excerpt] India's first 500 mw nuclear power reactor is likely to be commissioned during 1995-96, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Thursday, report agencies.

Work on design and engineering of the 500 mw reactor is now at an advanced stage, Minister of State for Atomic Energy K.R. Narayanan said in a written answer.

The 15-year nuclear power profile prepared by the Atomic Energy Department envisaged setting up of 12 units of 235 mw and 10 units of 500 mw capacity pressurised heavy water reactors.

One of the main constraints is the availability of investment resources to convert the nuclear power board into a corporation, the minister said.

The Government denied that there was a proposal with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to import paper from Japan for the purpose of making portraits of Indian scientists.

The minister told Mr S. S. Vaghela during question hour that the director general of the CSIR during a meeting with the Prime Minister had discussed the proposed of making portraits of scientists like C.V. Raman and J.C. Bose with a view to promoting science and scientific development. But there was no proposal

to import paper from Japan for this purpose, he added. [passage omitted]

Opposition Walkout Protests Atrocities to Farmers

BK191520 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1530 GMT 19 Mar 87

[Text] In Gujarat, three persons were killed and 41 injured in a police firing and mob violence by farmers at Pethapur near Gandhinagar today. The farmers were proceeding toward the capital to gherao [blockade] the assembly in response to a call given by the Bhartiya Kisan Sangh [Indian Farmers Association]. The chief minister, Mr Amarsingh Chaudhary, told newsmen in Gandhinagar today that 28 police personnel were among the injured. He also disclosed that a former chief minister, Mr Madhavsingh Solanki, was attacked with pipes and lathis [batons] by a mob in (Modsa) in Sabarkhantha District. He has been admitted in a civil hospital in Ahmadabad. His car was set ablaze. Mr Chaudhary said the miscreants also set fire to 36 state road transport buses at various places in the state. Civil authorities in Ahamadabad say Mr Solanki is out of danger.

The state assembly today rejected an adjournment motion condemning the so-called police atrocities on farmers. The entire opposition walked out in protest against the motion being rejected. The agitating farmers are demanding, among other things, remunerative prices for their produce and reduction of electricity tariff.

92 Arrested; Death Toll Climbs to 5

BK200316 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0240 GMT 20 Mar 87

[Excerpts] In Gujarat, the death toll in yesterday's clashes between the farmers and the police in the wake of a Bharatiya Kisan Sangh's [Indian Farmers Association's] march to the state assembly in Gandhinagar has gone up to five. Of these, four were killed in police firing, while a policeman was killed in mob violence. More than 200 persons, including 140 policemen, were injured in clashes at different places. Sixty-seven vehicles, including 60 state transport buses, were set on fire and 40 other vehicles, including 36 state transport buses, were damaged by the angry mobs at several places in Gandhinagar, Sabarkanta, Khera, Mehsana, and Baroda Districts. Ninety-two persons have been arrested in connection with the clashes. [passage omitted] The Bhratiya Kisan Sangh has demanded a judicial inquiry into the violent incidents.

The condition of the former chief minister, Mr Madhavsingh Solanki, who was injured in the mob attack, is improving. The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, and the union home minister, Mr Buta Singh, have wished him a speedy recovery. The state chief minister, Mr Amarsingh Chaudhary, and many other state dignitaries also called on him to inquire about his health.

The Bharatiya Kisan Sangh and the former chief minister, Mr Babubhai Patel, have condemned the attack on Mr Solanki.

Exports Increase, Trade Deficit Declines

BK190357 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0240 GMT 19 Mar 87

[Text] India's exports have registered a 17 percent growth rate in the first 10 months of the current financial year. According to an official press release, the exports during the period were over 10,075 crore rupees as against 8,610 crores in the corresponding period last year. The trade deficit has also shown a decline of over 17 percent.

Soviet Union Willing To Set Up Joint Projects

BK190824 Karachi Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 19 Mar 87

[Text] The USSR is willing to cooperate in setting up joint projects in Pakistan in collaboration with the private sector. This has been stated by the economic counselor of USSR during a meeting with the president of the Lahore chamber of commerce and industry in Lahore. The USSR counselor also gave the chamber president a list of 300 projects in which the Soviet Union was willing to assist.

AFP Cites Poll on India's Use of Nuclear Weapons

BK191237 Hong Kong AFP in English 1202 GMT 19 Mar 87

[Text] Islamabad, March 19 (AFP) — Fifty percent of Pakistanis fear that India would use nuclear weapons against Pakistan in case of war, a Pakistani survey published here Thursday said.

Only 13 percent out of a sample of 2,000 thought that India will not use nuclear weapons while 37 percent did not give any opinion, according to a survey recently conducted by the Gallup Pakistan (Pakistan Institute of Public Opinion) in 75 statistically selected urban localities and 100 villages all over the country.

The fear among the young Pakistanis is higher, the report said. It said that "54 percent of those under the age of 30 were of the opinion that India will use nuclear weapons compared with 48 percent of those above sixty".

In the provinces of Sind and Punjab, bordering India, the threat is felt "particularly strongly" where more than 55 percent said that in case of war India will use nuclear weapons.

About the possibilities of war with India "only 12 percent of the population believed there were no chances of war between the [countries] report said.

SRI LANKA

SUN Views Tamil Refugees in UK 'Controversy'

BK181625 Colombo SUN in English 11 Mar 87 p 7

[Editorial: "Fresh Approach"]

[Text] For Sri Lanka's refugee problem, as well as for all other problems, there is one solid foundation on which the issue could be tackled — the truth. Because it is the truth alone that stands the test of time — lies will soon be exposed.

In recent weeks, the controversy over the 58 Tamil refugees in Britain, has drawn worldwide attention to the ethnic crisis and related issues in Sri Lanka. Top British newspapers have sent senior reporters and photographers here to probe deep into the stories of the refugees. With election fever gripping Britain and Margaret Thatcher alleged to be using even the budget for vote buying, Sri Lanka's refugee issue is also being argued out on political platforms there.

While so much political attention and public interest has been created in Britain it is unfortunate that the authorities in Sri Lanka have still not realised the seriousness of the refugee problem.

The Eelam propaganda organisations in world capitals — helped by some human rights and religious institutions — have made capital out of the undeniable humanitarian aspects of the refugee crisis.

But Lankan officials and diplomats have reacted indifferently or amateurishly to the issues raised by refugee flights.

Flat denials or the overcautious 'no comment' have been used too often and seasoned Western media personnel do not take too kindly to such tactics. Often Lankan officials have allegedly told lies to cover up the lies of Eelam propagandists, thus creating more problems.

On the issue of the 58 Tamil refugees in Britain, the main point of controversy is whether they will be ill-treated if they are sent back to Sri Lanka. Other than for legal proceedings against some bogus refugees who carried false travel documents, Sri Lanka's record is as good as that of any Western democratic country. The facts are clear for anyone to see.

Instead of highlighting this truth, Lankan officials have been raising all sorts of other issues, with plenty of holes in them.

From incident to incident, this refugee issue seems to be getting out of hand and marring the image of Sri Lanka. It would be advisable to form a top-level high powered committee, including media personnel, to study and recommend remedial action on all aspects of the refugee problem. It can no longer be handled piecemeal or in fits and starts. The issues are now clear. There are syndicates and designing political elements, using innocent and fear-stricken people in well organised refugee rackets. The thrust of the new effort should be to expose these racketeers, while treating the refugees with the human considerations that are necessary.

Khamene'i Views U.S. Policy 'Failure' in Sermon
LD201225 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1030 GMT 20 Mar 87

[Text] Iran's Hezbollah nation on the last day of the year 1365 [year ending 20 March] today went to Friday prayer venues throughout the country and once again demonstrated their unprecedented resistance and steadfastness against the plots of global arrogance, stressing the continuation of the path of the combatants of Islam until final victory over the Zionist enemy. In Tehran, too, the Mohammadan Friday prayer ritual was held at Tehran University campus and the surrounding thoroughfares under the imamate of Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, the Friday imam of Tehran.

In the prayer sermons the president paid tribute to the dear martyrs of the tragic explosion during the Friday prayer ceremonies in Tehran in 1363 [1984]. He grave a brief account of military and political activities during the current [Iranian] year. He said: From a military standpoint, the year '65 was one of the most brilliant years of the war. It began with the combatants' victory in the "Karbala' I" offensive in the Mehran region. With mighty and lightning operations, our combatants liberated Mehran, which the Zionist enemy wanted to exchange for Al-Faw. Continuing their relentless battle against the Zionist enemy, they embarked on the "Karbala' II" and "Karbala' III" offensives, resulting in the liberation of strategic heights and the capture of the Zionist enemy's missile platforms, thus disappointing Saddam's backers.

The chairman of the Supreme Defense Council also described the various aspects of the "Fath" and "Karbala' V" offensives. He said: The "Karbala' V" offensive demonstrated the speed, power, and faith of the combatants of Islam while exposing Saddam's military weakness to the world. It was in the course of that offensive that rumors about Saddam's departure began to be spread.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Khamene'i referred to the victories achieved in the course of the "Karbala' VII" offensive and the continuing presence of popular forces at the front. He stressed: This operation will assuredly continue with the utmost vigor as long as the Iraqi regime remains on the scene. The Iranian nation will continue the war and struggle as long as that regime remains in power. It will not accept anything short of victory by the combatants of Islam and the elimination of the 'Aflaqi Saddam.

Continuing the prayer sermons, the president referred to the sensationalist story and America's political disgrace relating to Iran. He said: From the day the scandal was exposed American leaders daily gave the American nation and the world one lie after another. In the Tower Commission report, too, they concocted stories, some of which contain truth, but which are largely fictional. The Tehran Friday imam went on: The Islamic Republic of Iran is planning to publish a report about the matter in the future. Then the world will realize the extent to which the American bosses have lied.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Khamene'i, describing America's objectives relating to that matter said: They were pursuing three objectives: One of them is related to the issue of the hostages. This does not mean that the American bosses are concerned about the hostages; rather, by raising that issue they intended to compensate for the question mark that has been put on America's imposing presence. But they failed.

Their second objective was to establish relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is because the American President and other American officials have come to believe in the durability and strength of our system. They have frequently stressed this point in their statements. Reagan himself once again referred to this matter in his remarks last night.

Mr Khamene'i added: Their third objective was to gain a foothold against the other superpower and their arch-rival the Soviet Union, and to renew the spying operation they were engaged in under the previous regime. But since the Islamic Republic of Iran's system is based on neither East nor West, it has cut off the hands of all the powers and demonstrated that there is no place for America or anybody else in Iran.

The Tehran Friday imam emphasized: America's failure relating to this matter stems from the erroneous analyses of the American ruling quarters' politicians whose stock-in-trade are lies, perfidy, and deception. Like any other activity that is based on a false premise, it is doomed to failure despite all the efforts that may be expended on it. America's failure of domestic and international policy in this matter demonstrates the point.

Continuing his remarks, the Tehran Friday imam referred to the unity between the people and officials and noted: The government, the officials, and the people, in planning for the future and with resistance and steadfastness, should prepare themselves even more. God willing, after the passage of a period of resistance and hardship, the days of construction and welfare will dawn. It is thanks to that unity that we have reached the place we are now and have been able to remove the greatest of obstacles. We should believe that any action based on justice, faith, and truthfulness will be successful.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani Addresses Majlis, Lauds Montazeri
LD191809 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1630 GMT 19 Mar 87

[Excerpts] Our correspondent reports on the last open session of the Islamic Consultative Assembly this year [ending 20 March 1987].

[Unidentified correspondent] [Passage omitted] At the close of today's open session Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed thanks and appreciation to all those persons who helped to prepare the budget bill and assist in getting it approved.

Referring to the effective presence of the deputies at the fronts and amidst the combatants, he said: We are grateful to our combatants for becoming objects of pride epitomizing the greatness of Islam and for displaying the power of Islam and of the revolution. This year we have witnessed the presence of blasphemy and arrogance against the revolution and Islam. We know this when we see the resistance of our people, the self-

sacrifice of our combatants, and the memories of the blood of our martyrs.

The speaker, on behalf of all the deputies of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, also expressed thanks and gratitude to the families of the martyrs, the maimed, and the crippled, and expressed hope that next year will be a year of total victory for the people, the revolution, and all Muslims.

Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani also said: All these things fall under the shadow of the leadership of our exalted leader, and we are all his students and followers. May the Almighty not lessen his shadow over us, all Muslims, and the Islamic Revolution.

The speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly also said: We pray that Almighty God will maintain the blessed shadow of the eminent jurisconsult, the successor to the leadership, His Excellency the Grand Ayatollah Montazeri, who is justly the hope of the nation, the source of encouragement to the people, and the expression of our revolutionary peoples' confidence in the future of their revolution.

Western Investment Company Establishment Announced

PM191155 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 10 Mar 87 p 18

[Interview by unnamed *Keyhan* economic correspondent with 'Ali Reza Sheykh 'Atar, "deputy of the war affairs office and adviser to the minister of industries"; date and place not given]

[Text] [Correspondent] A while ago the establishment of the new Western Investment Company was announced. As general manager of this company, would you please state the company's aims and policy with regard to economic growth in the area.

[Sheykh 'Atar] The western regions of our country include Kordestan, Western Azarbayjan, Bakhtaran, and Ilam Provinces. These are frontier areas, and their inhabitants have for many years defended our territorial integrity. Under the old regime this area was considered one of the poorest in the country.

Following the success of the Islamic Revolution, the government was forced to devote a great deal of its time, energy, and financial and manpower resources to bringing security to the region. Today security has largely been established in the area, and the Islamic Republic has seen fit to fill the voids in the region very quickly and to take steps toward economic growth.

A plan was drawn up following necessary research into growth potentials, natural resources, and manpower and steps were taken by various organizations. The proposed plan was then handed to the government.

This company has the duty to go into action in the fields of production, industry, agriculture, trade, welfare, and even culture, for which there is no budget in the government's welfare program. The company's total starting capital has been fixed at 1.2 billion rials, and the minister of industries is chairman of the company board.

This company will in turn supervise smaller subcompanies in order to create production units by investing in them and by attracting outside investments from the private and welfare sectors.

The company's aim is also to create employment in the impoverished areas. Unfortunately, because of a lack of economic initiatives, there is high unemployment in that area. In order to solve many of the region's problems, there is a need for help in welfare and cultural affairs through aid to the government sector. There is a need to help the area export its products in the form of industrial, agricultural, and traditional products.

It is necessary to help restart production units in the region that have been closed down or forced to cut back due to a shortage of manpower or a lack of investment. In the western areas these units include the chewing gum factory in Ilam, the dairy plant and cement factory in Kordestan, and some agroindustrial units that are either operating at half their capacity, are at a standstill, or are only half-completed. The first step that the company will take is to restart these units.

The company will also help the government in the field of distribution, because it will be involved in trade.

We have recently held meetings with the governors-general of the four provinces and all the executive officials of the area involved in economic and cultural affairs. We have also held talks with Majlis deputies from all four provinces and explained the details of the company's plans.

We hope that from the beginning of next year [starting 21 March 1987], the company will begin serious activities. The headquarters of the firm will be in Sanandaj, and it will have branches in the three other provinces. Arrangements have also been made for personnel at each of the centers to be chosen from among the local population.

[Correspondent] Will the company be involved in trying to alleviate poverty in other regions of the country?

[Sheykh 'Atar] If there are to be similar plans for other regions, other companies will have to be established. Of course, I have to remind you that this company is the Islamic Republic's first experiment in establishing companies for growth and investment in poor areas. If the plan succeeds, we will try to expand it to other areas of the nation.

[Correspondent] One of our problems since the revolution has been that local elements have not been involved in executive policies or social and economic growth. In the light of past experience, will we witness similar cases in the Western Investment Company?

[Sheykh 'Atar] As I have mentioned, the company headquarters is expected to be in Sanandaj and its active personnel will be drawn from the local populatitaon of all four provinces. This policy covers the point you have raised. Coordination with the responsible regional officials will follow the same outlines, so that the activities accomplished will be suited to the area's culture and needs.

[Correspondent] Do you feel that 1.2 billion rials will be enough for the four poor Kurdish-populated provinces?

[Sheykh 'Atar] That is a fair question. I must add, however, that it is not only the company that must accomplish these things. This company will form other companies, and they in turn will have their own capital. So the private sector is expected to be encouraged to invest in agricultural and industrial ventures.

[Correspondent] You mentioned the company's welfare sector and its involvement in agricultural and industrial activity. How do you think this economic sector can be used in the region?

[Sheykh 'Atar] The company charter expects it to be involved in welfare projects. With regard to the principles we have in the Constitution and keeping in mind the particular features of the area, the necessary priority will be given to the welfare sector.

[Correspondent] Have there been any special decisions with reagrd to a specific plan?

[Sheykh 'Atar] At present there are plans to restart those projects that have stopped functioning or are half-completed and get them functioning as soon as possible. These plans include 10 or 12 projects in the four Kurdish-populated provinces such as the chicken farm in Barmahak, the agroindustrial unit in Mahabad, the chewing gum factory in Ilam, the dairy plant in Kordestan, and the Kordestan cement plant. The company will then devise new plans in various areas with regard to the needs of every region.

[Correspondent] Has your early experience entailed any specific problems?

[Sheykh 'Atar] We have had no special problems. We are hoping that the organizations making up the company and especially the banks will help in the matter by realizing the importance of economic activities in the west of the country and by giving them special priority, keeping in mind the special political and cultural issues that exist there. We hope this help will be coordinated with those who are natives of the area and who are willing to invest. We hope that they recognize the precedence the government attaches to the issue.

[Correspondent] How much of this new experience will be coordinated with the country's new economic conditions?

[Sheykh 'Atar] There are many resources in the west of the country. There are farm lands, plenty of water, hard-working people, and very rich mines. I feel that these forces are rarely encountered all together in any other region of the country. If these resources are used properly, they will also help the government's policies under the new economic conditions.

Communique No 2,780 Reports 'Intelligence Gathering'

LD191520 Tehran IRNA in English 1504 GMT 19 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 19, IRNA — Iranian Navy gunboats intercepted and inspected four cargo ships and oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz Wednesday but allowed them to continue voyage after finding no suspicious cargo on board.

Announcing the above, the 2780th communique of the Joint Staff Command of Iran's Armed Forces said that Muslim forces of Iran continued shelling Iraqi positions throughout the fronts Wednesday, inflicting heavy casualties and losses on enemy troops.

Exchange of artillery fire continued all over the fronts Wednesday raging somewhat more heavily in the "Karbala'-5" operational theater in Shalamcheh, southern fronts, and in Sumar, western fronts.

Convoys of Iranian patrols successfully carried out intelligence gathering missions throughout the fronts Wednesday, inflicting effective blows on Iraqi troops, before returning safely to bases.

Nearly 50 Iraqi trucks carrying personnel in Basra operational theater sustained heavy losses Wednesday when they were hit by heavy Iranian artillery fire.

In the northwestern and western fronts Wednesday, parts of Iraqi fortifications were destroyed and several enemy batteries set ablaze under heavy artillery fire of Iranian Muslim combatants.

Iranian Gendarmerie forces reconnoitered and shelled Iraqi positions in parts of the southern and western fronts Wednesday, setting afire at least five Iraqi bunkers and observation posts and killing their crews, the communique concluded.